

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, June 21, 1887, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Baddeck — C. B. Thursday, June 21st, 1887. My dear May:

I have been in such a hurry-skurry since I arrived here that I hardly know whether I stand on my head or my feet — (It would be a feat if I could stand on my head!) — I found that I could not get on from Halifax on account of the ice! The St. Pierre tried it — and was rescued minus her propeller and etc., — The Brsa d' Or lakes have been free from ice for a long time — but the outer passages and ports have been besieged by ice from the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Arctic. I found from Mr. McLean that Sunday would stop me before I could reach the straits of Camro — and that in my case — I could not get on any quicker than if I waited in Halifax till Tuesday morning, under these circumstances — I thought I would spend Sunday where I could accumulate Brown-Lovejoy material. I made straight tracks for Wolfville, the home of the Dewolfe with whom you are connected through your Griswold ancestry.

Dr. Geo. H. Dewolf, a venerable genealogist — and medical man — welcomed me as a relative — at least by marriage.

The relationship is not very clearly made out — but he is anxious to belong to your branch of the Dewolf family — and is doing his best to gain admittance by constant correspondence with Mrs. Salisbury! He hopes to be able to prove himself a descendant of “Josiah” — though whom “Josiah” may be I know not — but listen and look wise.

Dr. and Mrs. Dewolf, Dr. and Mrs. Fitch and Mr. Fred Brown of Wolfville were very kind and courteous to me. Also Mr. John Le Brown of the same place. Family Bibles and old records were placed freely at my disposal — and I was directed where to go in Kentville to

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find Records and etc., — I thought it wise to proceed to Kentville on 2 Saturday afternoon in the expectation that I might be able to look over the old Land Records on Sunday. In this I was not disappointed The Record office however was three miles from Kentville. I worked there up till five o'clock Saturday afternoon and made arrangements to appear there Sunday while the people were at church. I finished copying all references to Browns before the people returned from church — so that no one was shocked at my impiety excepting the man in charge — whose conscience however was mollified by a dollar bill. I walked to and from the Record office — there getting in a good six mile walk in a bracing air. From Kentville I drove back to Wolfville Sunday afternoon — and Mr. Fred Brown took me in charge. He drove me to the old burying ground in Lower Horton where Nathaniel Brown, the father of Mrs. Abiel Lovejoy lies buried. I copied records from the old stones — and was introduced to his brother-in-law, Mr. James Leard. The same afternoon I was introduced to Mrs. McDougall and Miss Mary Brown —(daughters of the late Mr. Abiel Lovejoy Brown) who overflowed with genealogical information. In the evening I took supper with Mr. Fred Brown in Wolfville and was introduced to his wife and daughters. On the way back to the hotel — I met Dr. DeWolf — and spent the rest of the evening till late at night with him — and his wife.

The hotel in Wolfville — The American House — kept by Mr. Davis — has the honour of being the dirtiest hotel I have ever visited. The people were very kind and friendly and did their best for me — but the bed linen was a sight! The Porter House in Kentville — on the contrary — was very clean and tidy. Monday I spent in interviewing Miss Brown — and Mrs. McDougall in Lower Horton — and Mrs. John L. Brown in Wolfville. Caught the evening train for Halifax reaching there about 10 P. M. I found Firty at the depot — and I drove home with him. 3 His wife I found confined to bed with German measles. Staid Monday night at quite a nice little hotel close to the depot in Halifax — and actually succeeded in catching the 7:25 A. M. train for the Straights — where I found the “Marion” ready to make her first trip of the season.

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The weather had been cold and raw — rainy and cloudy — until then. The sun shone brightly as I stepped on board — and we had a delightful sail to the canal at St. Peters. It was then growing dark — and I lay down and had a splendid nap only waking on the summons of the steward that we were nearing Baddeck. Found Jim Dunlap and Jack Ballachey — I beg his pardon — Col. Jack Ballachey — awaiting me. I tumbled into bed and woke to as beautiful a day as I have seen. I never saw Baddeck looking more beautiful. I don't want to leave it at all. Poor Mr. Ballachey had had an awful time getting here. Had to come overland from the Straights at least as far as West Bay. We drove to “the cottage on stilts” — as the people irreverently call our new home. I think you will like it — though it does look a little queer. Mr. McCurdy has been taking so much trouble to please you. Your cottage seems to have been the first place that has been lifted up in this neighbourhood so as to have a story added underneath. It seems to be looked upon as quite a feat. Two or three contractors gave it up in despair. The last one nearly threw up the job. His wife said that lights had been seen at night in the empty house — and that this was a warning that something would happen to him. Mr. McCurdy told him he would be the laughing stock of the whole country if he gave it up on such a ground as that — so he proceeded. They had the house raised on logs — but not fastened — when a fearful storm came on — now — thought the unfortunate contractor and his wife — the warning is being fulfilled and even Mr. McCurdy himself gave the house up — but in the morning — there it was — safe and sound — and all has gone well. The plastering will be dry enough for occupancy in 10 days or so. We have decided to give all the woodwork one coat of white paint — leaving the finishing touches for you to suggest.

The house is much improved — and the verandah and etc., will be most enjoyable. Mr. McCurdy has built a good large ice-house — which has been well stocked with ice.

Your vegetable garden is quite extensive and Mr. McCurdy has himself planted your vegetables. I made a list of all the different vegetables for your benefit — but cannot find it now — It would however take up half a page and I cannot spare the space.

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The fruit trees are at the cottage for the present — They will be set out there — as they can easily be removed next spring. Mr. McCurdy thinks it unwise to make any more suggestions of taking possession of the point of Red Head — at the present time. I think there can be no doubt we shall be able to get the McCauley place in time — probably this summer or autumn.

I took Mr. Ballachey to Whycorough yesterday — to see Mr. Hent's head of Jerseys — and we visited North Sydney yesterday to see what market there is there for agricultural products — cattle — stock — etc.,

I will have a business meeting with Mr. McCurdy tomorrow to make business settlements with him up to June 1st. We cannot leave till Monday evening. Will go straight to Portland — Then to Boston and then home. Will you be ready to turn right round and come here? Much love to Elsie and Daisy.

Your loving husband, Alec.